

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 COME-00 SCEM-02 DRC-01 CIAE-00

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P R 151145Z DEC 73

FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9838

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, BR

SUBJECT: ALCOHOL - GASOLINE TRENDS

REF: STATE 241968

1. FOLLOWING IS COMBINED RESPONSE ON BEHALF AMEMBASSY BRASILIA AND CONGEN SAO PAULO.
2. WE HAVE SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO CONTACT APPROPRIATE INDIVIDUAL IN PETROBRAS FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION OF MIXING ALCHOL (ANHYDRONS ETHANOL) AND WILL REPORT ADDITIONAL DETAILS WHEN AVAILABLE.
3. CONGEN OFFICERS IN SAO PAULO REPORT, ON BASIS CONVERSATION WITH ENGINEERS IN CHARGE ESSO'S FUEL DEPOSIT IN COOCA, THAT ESSO'S NORMAL ALCHOL/GASOLINE BLEND IN SAO PAULO CONSISTS OF 5 TO 15 PERCENT ALCOHOL WITH THE PERCENTAGE DEPENDING UPON THE AVAILABILITY OF ALCOHOL. (NORMALLY, THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF ALCOHOL IN THIS AREA DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE CALENDAR YEAR BECAUSE OF THE TIMING OF THE CANE HARVEST WHICH CONCLUDES AROUND NOVEMBER AND THE SUBSEQUENT PROCESSING OF MOLASSES IN DECEMBER-FEBRUARY. THUS THERE IS EXPECTED TO BE RELATIVELY LITTLE ALCOHOL AVAILABLE TO BE BLENDED IN GASOLINE IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAO PAULO AREA FOR THE NEXT THREE TO FOUR MONTHS.)

4. ACCORDING TO SAO PAULO ESSO ENGINEERS, ALCOHOL BLENDS MAY BE USED FOR ALL TYPES AND SIZES OF MOTORS AND IN FACT, THEY CONTEND THAT ALCOHOL/GASOLINE BLENDS IMPROVE ENGINE FUNCTIONING SINCE IT UPGRADES THE OCTANE LEVEL. ACCORDING TO THEM, IT DOES NOT HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE ENGINE OR ON MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATIONS. THEY SAID THAT TESTS HAVE SHOWN THAT THE ALCOHOL CONTENT OF GASOLINE CAN GO AS HIGH AS 25 PERCENT WITH NO ADVERSE EFFECTS, ALTHOUGH THEY CAUTION THAT USERS OF ALCOHOL/GASOLINE BLENDS SHOULD BE CAREFUL THAT NO WATER IS ALLOWED TO MIX WITH THE GASOLINE. THERE ARE APPARENTLY NO SPECIAL TECHNIQUES USED IN THE BLENDING PROCESS.

5. FOREGOING OBSERVATIONS TEND TO CORRESPOND TO OBSERVATIONS REPORTED IN PRESS BY MOTORS ENGINEER AT AIR MINISTRY RESEARCH LABORATORY IN SAN JOSE DOS CAMPOS. LABORATORY HAS DONE EXTENSIVE TESTING OVER PAST YEARS IN BLENDING. INDUSTRY OFFICIALS IN RIO APPARENTLY HAVE HAD LESS EXPERIENCE WITH BLENDING. (GUANABARA HAS USED ONLY ABOUT 3-4 PERCENT ALCOHOL IN BLENDING UP TO NOW.) THEY DO NOT EXPECT BLENDING TO PRODUCE LARGE SAVINGS IN CONSUMPTION OF GASOLINE.

6. ON BASIS PRESS STORIES AND OTHER MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO US, IT APPEARS CURRENT POPULARITY OF IDEA OF BLENDING ALCOHOL WITH GASOLINE MAY RELATE AS MUCH TO SUGAR CROP SITUATION AS TO PETROLEUM SITUATION. IN ESSENCE THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN POLITICAL PRESSURES TO PERMIT INCREASED PLANTINGS OF SUGAR IN NORTHEAST. PRODUCERS SEE EMPHASIS ON PRODUCTION OF ALCOHOL, JUSTIFIED AS MEANS OF HELPING CRISIS, AS COMPENSATORY AND BENEFICIAL WAY TO MAINTAIN SUGAR ECONOMY. APPARENTLY IMMEDIATE LARGE SCALE INTRODUCTION OF ALCOHOL IN GASOLINE WILL, AS MINIMUM, BE DETERRED BY LACK OF APPROPRIATE REFINING CAPACITY.
BOONSTRA

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